

House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Minutes of Meeting
2021 Regular Session
May 19, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative John M. Stefanski, chairman of the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. in Room 3, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative John M. Stefanski, chairman
Representative Gerald "Beau" Beaulieu, IV
Representative Daryl Andrew Deshotel
Representative Royce Duplessis, vice chairman
Representative Les Farnum
Representative Foy Bryan Gadberry
Representative Valarie Hodges
Representative Dodie Horton
Representative Barry Ivey
Representative Sam L. Jenkins, Jr.
Representative Michael T. Johnson
Representative Jeremy S. LaCombe
Representative Rodney Lyons
Representative Tanner D. Magee
Representative Polly Thomas
Representative Malinda B. White

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Wilford Dan Carter, Sr.
Representative Candace N. Newell

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patricia Lowrey-Dufour, legislative analyst
Lorriane Lucas, attorney
Rosalie Ammersbach, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

John Harrington, clerk
Kylan Melancon, clerk
Vivian Hurst, sergeant at arms
Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms
Stephan Louis, sergeant at arms
Faye Talbot, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION**Senate Bill No. 203 by Senator White**

Senator White presented Senate Bill No. 203, which exempts certain groundwater district commissioners from provisions of the Code of Governmental Ethics.

Gray Sexton, ExxonMobil, Entergy, and Georgia-Pacific, 8680 Bluebonnet Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 767-2020, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 203.

Alesia Ardoin, ExxonMobil, Entergy, and Georgia-Pacific, 8680 Bluebonnet Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70810, (225) 767-2020, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 203.

Kristy F. Gary, deputy ethics administrator, Louisiana Board of Ethics, P.O. Box 4368, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-5600, emailed a letter on behalf of the Board of Ethics in opposition to Senate Bill No. 203, which is included in the committee records and labeled Exhibit A.

Kathleen M. Allen, ethics administrator, Louisiana Board of Ethics, P.O. Box 4368, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-5600, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 203.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to invoke the three-minute rule. Without objection, the three-minute rule was invoked by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Deshotel, Duplessis, Farnum, Ivey, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, Thomas, and White voted yea.

Jody Montelaro, Entergy, 446 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 203.

Vice Chairman Duplessis in the chair.

Kathy Wascom, Louisiana Environmental Action Network, 1255 Aberdeen Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 344-4313, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 203.

David Treppendahl, Together Louisiana, no address provided, (225) 235-9213, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 203.

Lady Carlson, Westside Sponsoring, 2019 Government Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (318) 880-7373, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 203.

Jennifer Carwile, Together Louisiana, 1855 Old Carriage Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (704) 526-8097, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 203.

Alaina Dilahra, Together Louisiana, 6311 Celestial Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70817, (225) 752-3524, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 203.

Chairman Stefanski in the chair.

Edgar Cage, Together Louisiana, 2019 Government Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 274-3808, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 203.

Wendell Lindsay, Together Louisiana, 5874 Chandler Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 892-2976, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 203.

Representative Deshotel offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 203 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 203 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Deshotel, Farnum, Gadberry, Ivey, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Magee, and Thomas voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support, and 57 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 8 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 64 by Senator Bernard

On behalf of Senator Bernard, Nancy Landry, first assistant secretary of state, office of the Louisiana secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 922-2880, presented Senate Bill No. 64, which provides relative to acts prohibited during early voting or on election day.

Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 64 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 64 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Deshotel, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Ivey, LaCombe, Lyons, and Thomas voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support, and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 74 by Senator Price

Senator Price presented Senate Bill No. 74, which provides for the disposition of abandoned property deposited at the state archives.

Catherine Newsome, state archivist and executive director, office of the Louisiana secretary of state, 3851 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 362-5229, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 74.

R. Kyle Ardoin, secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 922-2880, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 74.

Representative Gadberry offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 74 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 74 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Jenkins, LaCombe, Lyons, and Thomas voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 4 by Senator Price

Senator Price presented Senate Bill No. 4, which eliminates certain aggregate campaign contribution limitations.

Melissa Flournoy, Louisiana Progress Action, 2228 Cherokee Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 936-7200, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 4.

Peter Robins-Brown, Louisiana Progress Action, 650 North 6th Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (504) 256-8196, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 4.

Kristy F. Gary, deputy ethics administrator, Louisiana Board of Ethics, P.O. Box 4368, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-5600, emailed a letter on behalf of the Board of Ethics in opposition to Senate Bill No. 4, which is included in the committee records and labeled Exhibit A.

Representative LaCombe offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 4 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 4 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Jenkins, LaCombe, Lyons, and Thomas voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support, 2 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Senate Bill No. 73 by Senator Milligan

Senator Milligan presented Senate Bill No. 73, which provides relative to investment of domestic insurers.

Tom Travis, Louisiana Department of Insurance, 1702 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 342-2136, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 73.

Stewart Guerin, Louisiana Department of Insurance, 1702 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 219-3929, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 73.

Representative Beaulieu offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 73 favorably. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 73 was reported favorably by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Deshotel, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, and Thomas voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 by Representative Schexnayder

On behalf of Representative Schexnayder, Representative Stefanski presented House Concurrent Resolution No. 90, which provides relative to redistricting principles and criteria.

Chairman Stefanski stated that House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 would be voluntarily deferred and rescheduled for May 26, 2021, to allow committee members the opportunity to request any revisions they wanted to make to House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 and to allow the public the opportunity to submit testimony.

Melissa Flournoy, Louisiana Progress Action, 2228 Cherokee Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 936-7200, spoke in support of House Concurrent Resolution No. 90.

Representative Stefanski offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on House Concurrent Resolution No. 90. Without objection, action on House Concurrent Resolution No. 90 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, and Lyons voted yea.

Senate Bill No. 221 by Senator Hewitt

Senator Hewitt presented Senate Bill No. 221, which provides relative to voting systems.

Representative Stefanski offered amendments to provide that the Voting System Commission make a recommendation to the secretary of state regarding which voting system to procure rather than selecting a system and directing the secretary of state. Representative Stefanski offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, and Thomas voted yea.

Representative LaCombe in the chair.

Chairman Stefanski in the chair.

R. Kyle Ardoin, secretary of state, P.O. Box 94125, Baton Rouge, LA 70804, (225) 922-2880, spoke for information only on Senate Bill No. 221.

Maia Yordanov, 441 Lynnmeade Road, Gretna, LA 70056, (504) 638-4902, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 221.

Melissa Flournoy, Louisiana Progress Action, 2228 Cherokee Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 936-7200, spoke in support of Senate Bill No. 221.

Representative Duplessis offered amendments relative to the legislative appointments to the Voting System Commission, to require the presiding officers of each chamber to select a member affiliated with the Republican Party and a member affiliated with the Democratic Party. Representative Duplessis offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Duplessis, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, and Thomas voted yea.

Representative Hodges offered amendments to require all meetings of the Voting System Commission to be held at the state capitol and streamed live on the Internet. Representative Hodges withdrew her motion to adopt the proposed amendments. No vote was taken.

Candy Carroll Peavy, Integrity Matters, 942 Ontario Street, Shreveport, LA 71106, (318) 458-1543, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 221.

John Christopher Alexander, 1380 Steele Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 333-6434, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 221.

Catherine Alexander, 1380 Steele Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 408-9498, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 221 and provided a PowerPoint, "Election Fraud, Foreign Interference & Options for 6 JAN", labeled in the committee records as Exhibit B.

Jacques Soudelier, 1344 Hickory Avenue, Apartment B, Harahan, LA 70123, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 221.

Cinda vanMerrienboer, 2180 Glendale Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (334) 663-6047, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 221 and provided a copy of a letter, "Request to Cancel the Request for Proposal (RFP) for New Louisiana Voting System", labeled in the committee records as Exhibit C.

Christy Haik, 1280 Steele Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 221 and provided copies of letters written by members of the Congress of the United States, which are labeled in the committee records as Exhibit D.

Jennifer Miranda, 37176 Goodwood Street, Prairieville, LA 70769, (225) 278-4563, spoke in opposition to Senate Bill No. 221.

Representative Hodges offered a motion to report Senate Bill No. 221 with amendments. Without objection, Senate Bill No. 221 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, and Thomas voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 2 in support, 5 in opposition, and 4 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 3 in support, 15 in opposition, and 1 for information only. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

Consideration of proposed rules from the Board of Ethics regarding the limitation on food and drink

Chairman Stefanski deferred the discussion to consider the proposed rules from the Board of Ethics regarding limitations on food and drink.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Hodges offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Stefanski, Beaulieu, Farnum, Gadberry, Hodges, Horton, Jenkins, Mike Johnson, LaCombe, Lyons, and Thomas voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman John M. Stefanski
House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs

Date adopted: